

CALIFORNIA

OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

CABINETMAKERS AND BENCH CARPENTERS

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INTEREST AREA
REALISTIC



WHAT DOES A CABINETMAKER DO?

CABINETMAKERS are skilled woodworkers. They are also known as Bench Carpenters in some locations. They design, make, repair, alter, and install fine wooden cabinets, fixtures, furniture, paneling, partitions, doors, and windows. They may also use fiberboard, laminated plastic products, and vinyl surfacing materials as they cut, shape, prepare the surface, assemble the parts, and install the final product they have made in a variety of locations. Cabinetmakers usually build custom-made items as distinguished from semi-skilled production woodworkers who set up, operate, and tend woodworking machines in sawmills, plywood mills, and manufacturing plants. This occupational guide will focus upon these skilled craft workers, and not upon the semi-skilled production woodworkers.

Cabinetmakers use machines and hand tools that include various saws, shapers, planers, jointers, routers, mortisers, tenoners, molders, sanders, planes, chisels, and wood files. They use hand tools to assemble and finish the frame, hang doors, fit drawers, attach hardware, and install the final product. They also may do shaping, curving, and inlay work. Some shops that employ Cabinetmakers specialize in making only cabinets for homes and businesses, while others make furniture such as booths, counters, and panels for restaurants. Some cabinet shops work only as subcontractors for general building contractors.

Cabinetmakers perform the following tasks:

- Study blueprints, drawings, and written requirements for articles to be constructed or repaired and plan the steps to complete the job.
- Mark dimensions of parts on paper or lumber, following blueprints, and match lumber color, grain, and texture.
- Set up and operate various machines and hand tools.
- Cut and shape wood and other materials.
- Trim parts of joints to ensure a snug fit.
- Bore holes for insertion of screws or dowels by hand or using a boring machine.
- Glue, fit, and clamp parts and sub-assemblies together to form a complete unit.
- Drive nails or other fasteners into joints of articles to prepare for finishing.
- Sand and scrape surfaces of articles to prepare articles for finishing.
- Dip, brush, or spray assembled pieces with protective or decorative materials, such as stain, varnish, or lacquer.
- Install hardware, such as hinges, latches, and drawer pulls, using hand tools.

WHAT SKILLS ARE IMPORTANT?

Important skills, knowledge, and abilities for Cabinetmakers include:

- Operation and Control – Controlling operations of equipment or systems.
- Equipment Selection – Determining the kind of tools and equipment needed to do a job.
- Installation – Installing equipment, machines, wiring, or programs to meet specifications.
- Mathematics – Using mathematics to solve problems.
- Building and Construction – Knowledge of materials, methods, and the tools involved in the construction or repair of houses, buildings, or other structures such as highways and roads.
- Design – Knowledge of design techniques, tools, and principles involved in production of precision technical plans, blueprints, drawings, and models.
- Engineering and Technology – Knowledge of the practical application of engineering science and technology. This includes applying principles, techniques, procedures, and equipment to the design and production of various goods and services.
- Production and Processing – Knowledge of raw materials, production processes, quality control, costs, and other techniques for maximizing the effective manufacture and distribution of goods.
- Written Comprehension – The ability to read and understand information and ideas presented in writing.
- Manual Dexterity – The ability to quickly move your hand, your hand together with your arm, or your two hands to grasp, manipulate, or assemble objects.
- Arm-Hand Steadiness – The ability to keep your hand and arm steady while moving your arm or while holding your arm and hand in one position.
- Visualization – The ability to imagine how something will look after it is moved around or when its parts are moved or rearranged.
- Information Ordering – The ability to arrange things or actions in a certain order or pattern according to a specific rule or set of rules (e.g., patterns of numbers, letters, words, pictures, mathematical operations).

WHAT'S THE WORK ENVIRONMENT?

Most cabinet shops are adequately lighted and ventilated, although not all shops are heated or air-conditioned. Locations where the finished products are installed are usually clean, although they may not be heated or air-conditioned, either. Working conditions include machine and tool noise, and the presence of wood dust and possible finishing product vapors. Cabinetmakers must often wear protective equipment for ear, eye, and skin, and lung hazards. Workers must also follow operating safety instructions and use safety shields or guards when operating equipment to prevent accidents.

The work involves moderate physical activity and usually includes some heavy lifting. A variety of power and hand tools are used during the construction process, so workers must have endurance and hand-to-eye coordination. Journey-level Cabinetmakers may be expected to have all of their own hand tools, although some shops only require them to have a few basic tools and will provide the rest.

Union Membership

Most Cabinetmakers in California do not belong to a union. However, Cabinetmakers who work in shops that have agreements with the union must be members of the local union. Unions that supply Cabinetmakers to these shops are affiliated with the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America union.

WHAT'S THE CALIFORNIA JOB OUTLOOK?

The following information is from the occupational projections produced by the Employment Development Department's Labor Market Information Division:

Estimated number of workers in 2000:	19,000
Estimated number of workers in 2010:	21,200
Projected Growth 2000-2010:	11.6%
Est. openings due to separations by 2010:	6,400

These figures do not include self-employment.

Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters will grow slower than average compared with all occupations in California.

Trends

Limited growth is expected for Cabinetmakers due to computerization of machinery, increased imports, environmental control measures, and the use of alternative wood products. However, opportunities are expected to be good for those workers who specialize in items such as stairs, moldings, cabinets, and windows. Employment in all woodworking occupations is highly sensitive to the homebuilding market and to economic cycles. During economic downturns, workers may be laid off or have their hours reduced.

WHAT DOES THE JOB PAY?

California Earnings

Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters 2002 Wages

Hourly wages range from	\$8.28	to	\$14.34
Average hourly wage	\$11.93		
Average annual wage	\$24,805		

Source: *Occupational Employment Survey of Employers* by EDD/LMID.

Wages for those in a union apprenticeship program begin at 50-68% of journey level wages and increase every six months until they reach journey-level.

Experienced Cabinetmakers may become self-employed and can expect to earn more than the above wages.

Hours

Cabinetmakers normally work forty hours in a five-day week but may work overtime on certain jobs, especially in the summer.

Benefits

Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters have benefit packages that include medical, dental, vision, and life insurance, vacation and retirement, and limited sick leave.

HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE JOB?

Education and Training

Many Cabinetmakers are trained on the job learning skills by observing and helping experienced workers. Some acquire skills through an apprenticeship program or vocational

education, or by working as carpenters on construction jobs. Most Cabinetmakers take several years to become skilled at their profession, depending upon the method by which they have been trained.

The union apprenticeship program admits 17 year-old applicants with a high school diploma or the equivalent. Those admitted must be physically able to perform the work. The program takes approximately four years to complete. It includes job experience and night classes at adult vocational education centers or community colleges.

High school students interested in becoming Cabinetmakers should take classes in wood shop, drafting, and mathematics, which will include instruction in both construction and safety skills. They also should approach building contractors for part-time or temporary work as a helper during the school year or in the summer for work experience. In addition to apprenticeship programs, there are also certificate and associate of arts degree programs available at several colleges in the State.

Licensing and Certification

Cabinetmakers, carpenters, or others desiring to become licensed contractors should contact the Contractors State License Board for additional information at www.cslb.ca.gov.

Continuing Education

There are no continuing education requirements, but advanced journey-level classes are available to upgrade skills for union workers.

HOW DO I FIND THE JOB?

Direct application to employers remains one of the most effective job search methods. For those Cabinetmakers who belong to the union, out-of-work registration with the local union hiring hall is one of the most effective ways to gain employment. Private firms are listed in the yellow pages under Cabinetmakers, Cabinet Refinishing, Furniture Custom Design or Repair, Kitchen Cabinets, Bathroom Fixtures, Office Furniture, Remodeling Contractors, Shelving, and Woodworkers. California job openings can be found at various online job-listing systems including CalJOBSSM at www.caljobs.ca.gov or at America's Job Bank at www.ajb.dni.us.

For other occupational and wage information and a listing of the largest employers in any county, visit the Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Web page at www.calmis.ca.gov. Find further job search assistance from your nearest Job Service office at www.edd.ca.gov/jsloc.htm or the closest One-Stop site listed on the California WorkNet site at www.sjtcc.ca.gov/sjtccweb/one-stop.

WHERE CAN THIS JOB LEAD?

Advancement opportunities are often limited depending upon availability, seniority, and a worker's skills and initiative. Those with Cabinetmaker experience and education or training in areas of supervision, mathematics, mechanical drafting, physics, and computer operations may advance in this industry to jobs as detailers, estimators, supervisors, or as cabinet shop owners.

OTHER SOURCES OF INFORMATION

CA Division of Apprenticeship Standards
For the closest district office, go to Web site www.dir.ca.gov/DAS/das.html, or call Apprenticeship Standards Information listed in your telephone directory white pages

Contractors State License Board
9821 Business Park Drive
Sacramento, CA 95827
(800) 321-2752
www.cslb.ca.gov

United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America
Northern California Regional Council
448 Hegenberger Road
Oakland, CA 94621-1418
(510) 568-4788
www.norcalcarpenters.org

Southwest Regional Council of Carpenters
533 South Fremont Street, 10th Floor
Los Angeles, CA 90071
(213) 385-1457

Associated Builders and Contractors
Golden Gate Chapter
11875 Dublin Blvd., Suite C258
Dublin, CA 94568-2842
(925) 829-9230
www.abc.org/gate
Los Angeles-Ventura Chapter
4515 Alger Street
Los Angeles, CA 90039
(818) 551-6755
www.abc.org/laventura

Employment Projections by Occupation
www.calmis.ca.gov/htmlfile/subject/occproj.htm

Employment and Wages by Occupation
[www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup\\$/OES\\$.htm](http://www.calmis.ca.gov/file/occup$/OES$.htm)

RELATED OCCUPATIONAL GUIDES

Carpenters No. 169

OCCUPATIONAL CODE REFERENCES

SOC (*Standard Occupational Classification*)
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters 51-7011

O*NET (*Occupational Information Network*)
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters 51-7011.00

OES (*Occupational Employment Statistics*)
Cabinetmakers and Bench Carpenters 89311
Carpenters 87102

DOT (*Dictionary of Occupational Titles*)
Cabinetmaker 660.280-010
Cabinetmaker Apprentice 660.280-014
Bench Carpenter 760.684-010
Carpenter 860.381-022
Carpenter Apprentice 860.381-026